



# **“THE RESERVIST IN ACQUISITION”**

**April 2001**





# OVERVIEW

- **Perspective on what the acquisition process should mean to you**
- **Acquisition community perspectives**
- **External forces that may come into play**
- **So what do you do? - Authority, Roles and Responsibilities**
- **Key points or watch points**



**“WHAT SHOULD THE  
ACQUISITION PROCESS  
MEAN TO YOU?”**



# USER COMMUNITY TYPICALLY MAY SEE THE ACQUISITION PROCESS "TIP OF THE ICEBERG"

## FINAL PRODUCT AND SUSTAINMENT

**Program Management      Engineering**  
**Contracting      Logistics**  
**Test & Evaluation      Configuration Control      Data**  
**Management      Production/QA**  
**Legal functions Political Dynamics**  
**Multi-Service Influence      International Influence**



# **VIABLE PERSPECTIVE OF THE USER COMMUNITY TEAMED WITH THE ACQUISITION COMMUNITY**



**Not understanding roles, proactively interfacing in more depth with the acquisition team, or cooperating, may contribute to the whole effort “falling in the drink” in some way or another (balance of forces is needed).**



# DEFENSE ACQUISITION BUSINESS

- **Cumbersome**
  - “Standard” timelines to do things (e.g., “it takes 120 days to modify this contract”)
  - Small tweaks in software - changes in testing, data, configuration management, drawings, tech orders, etc.
  - Worse with downsizing we are told - less people to get the job done
  - Regulations and guidance
    - starts with the FAR 5000 series
    - covers guidance and mandatory direction in tremendous breadth and depth



# DEFENSE ACQUISITION BUSINESS

- **Dynamic**
  - **Continual energy to improve process with acquisition reform**
    - tools and methodologies to reduce time, cost
    - acquisition reform initiatives year after year
  - **Local policies, methodologies, procedures change with time**
    - middle and upper management turnover



# NO PROGRAM IS IDENTICAL WITH OTHERS

- **Sizes of programs vary by dollar amount “bins” described as Acquisition Category I (ACAT I) on down to III and IV**
  - **The larger the program (\$\$):**
    - **the more formalized things become**
    - **the higher the approval process required**
    - **the longer the timelines for every particular phase and effort**
    - **the more Congressional interest is involved**





# NO PROGRAM IS IDENTICAL WITH OTHERS

- Types of programs (and contracts) vary depending on:
  - The commodity gained (product or service)
  - Level of maturity of product
  - Risk level of failure / success perceived or tolerated
  - Government support / products available to provide to the program (GFE /CFE)



# **USER AND OPERATIONAL REPRESENTATION**

- **Acquisition team probably has little to no reference or experience with operations.**
- **Operational expert of the team**
  - **First and foremost: Duty to ensure operational requirements are met**
  - **Provide sanity check on what is worth additional cost and/or extension of schedule**
  - **Troubleshooting in the area of requirements discrepancy (what's worth fighting for?)**
    - **program manager disagreement vs. contractor disagreement**



# USER REPRESENTATION IS IMPORTANT

- **Other user supporting functions :**
  - **Help streamline planning and execution of testing with use of Government (AFRC/ANG) assets**
    - **Litening II and Air National Guard Air Force Reserve Test Center (AATC)**
  - **Logistics considerations and plans**
    - **proper review and creation of training manuals**
  - **Coordinating site activations, IOC declarations, Source of Repair Assignment Process**
    - **contractual implications**



# **THIS IS WHY REPRESENTATION IS SO IMPORTANT...**

- **Main conduit of user agency with two-way coordination between two communities**
  - **Status of program and general issues to appropriate user agency members**
  - **Status of funding and user agency management decisions to the program manager and team**
  - **BOTTOM LINE: It's our requirement**
    - **you are keeper of the purse strings**
    - **ensuring return of investment as originally planned**
    - **investing now versus paying later**



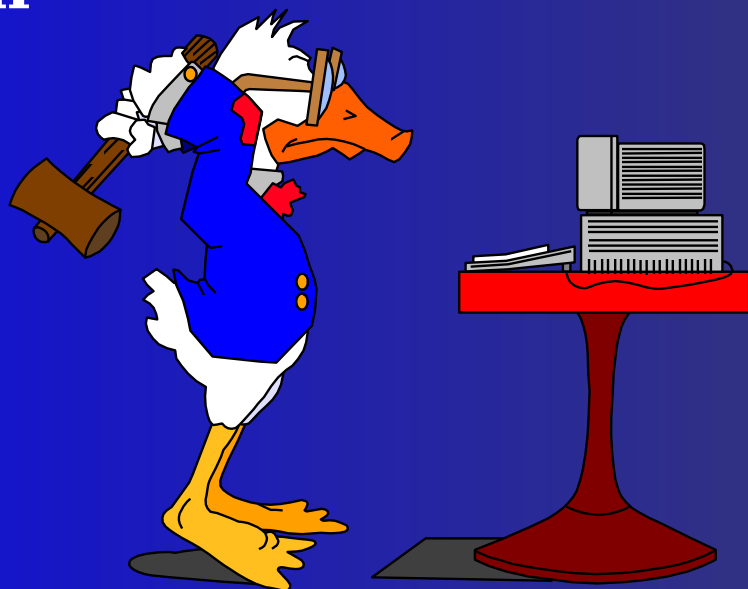
# PERSPECTIVE OF THE ACQUISITION COMMUNITY





# MINDSETS OR PERSPECTIVES

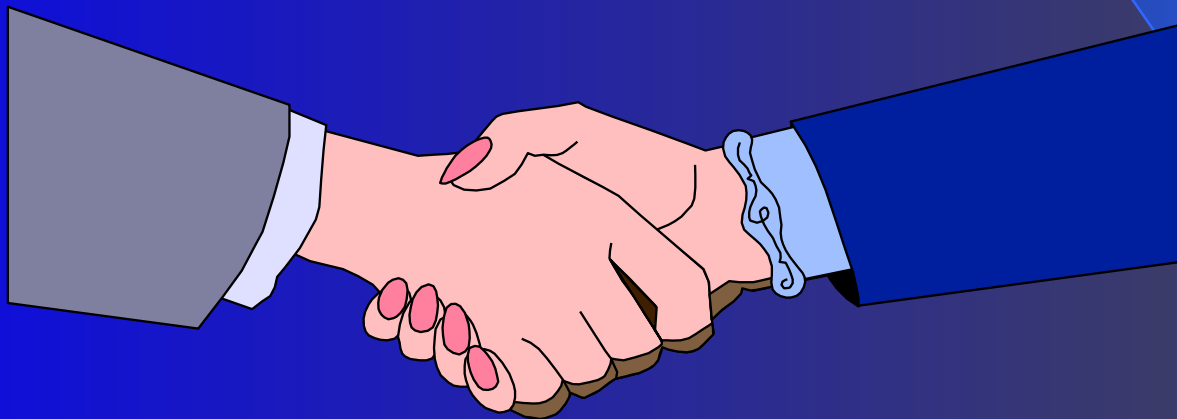
- From: “After requirements, only role of the customer is to sit back and watch the show... we’re responsible for program execution”





# MINDSETS OR PERSPECTIVES

- **To: “If we don’t have extensive user involvement in all phases of the program, we’re planning for failure...”**





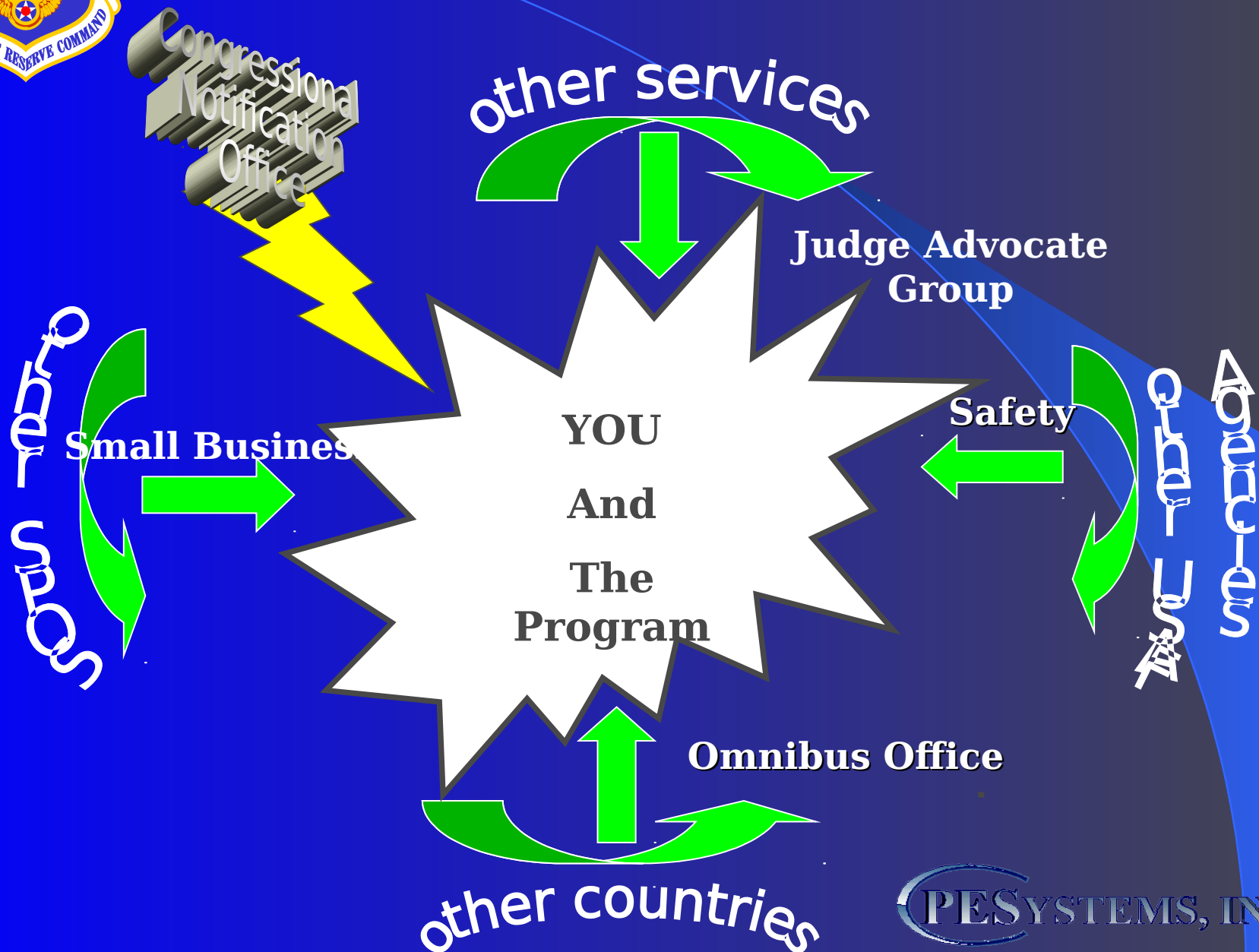
# FAMILIARITY WITH THE AFRC/ANG

- **From: “AFRC and ANG? I think they help the actives sometimes when we have a war - or something like that.”**
- **To: “AFRC has a large and growing role in all elements of U.S. defense air and space operations and this program is vital to the effectiveness of the total force structure for any future contingency.”**
- **And all points in between.**





# EXTERNAL FORCES





# OTHER COUNTRIES - ONE WORLD

- **The contractor team may include foreign sub vendors**
  - **Potential foreign releaseability issues**
  - or-
  - **Foreign country that shares the same platform**
    - **could help in cost of production**
    - **could hinder schedule and priority of deliveries**
  - **Parties that weigh in:**
    - **Congress**
    - **Program Element Monitors at the Pentagon**
    - **State Department**



# OTHER GOVERNMENT SERVICES

- **Test Agencies**
  - **Government Labs**
    - **Software Test Facilities**
  - **Flight Test Ranges**
    - **Edwards**
    - **AATC**
    - **SEEK EAGLE**
- **Defense Plant Representative Offices (DPRO)**



# OTHER SERVICES

- **Pending or existing involvement with other U.S. services**
  - **Hindrance**: Jointness increases cost, impacts schedule - political forces, production line impacts
  - **Could help**: Reduced unit costs with a higher volume purchase
  - **Stay closely apprised with strategies and briefing of Program Manager on up**
  - **Keep AFRC management apprised on events as they unfold**



# OTHER USAF USER AGENCIES

- **Air National Guard, Air Combat Command, Air Mobility Command, AF Special Operations Command**
  - **Different situation: Gaining Command / Using Command relationship - part of the Combat Air Forces (CAF)**
  - **Coordination still elevated: Keep straight “shares of funding” and delivery schedule**
  - **Should be more of an asset than a liability compared to other external agency examples**



# OTHER SYSTEM PROGRAM OFFICES (SPO)

- **Multiple SPO's (and associated contractors)**
  - **Aircraft platform SPO and "product" SPO**
  - **May get overlooked additional costs**
    - **example: software formats and protocol compatibility**
  - **Program Schedule: Conflict or domino effect of several modifications with platform**
  - **PM's job to coordinate and negotiate conflicts**



# VARIOUS NON-CORE AGENCIES

- **Congressional Notification Office**
  - Staffers looking for information for a good reason... keep ear to the ground
- **Omnibus Office**
- **Small Business Office**
- **Safety Offices**
  - Little to no compromise or negotiation here...
- **Judge Advocate Group**
  - Advice and rulings impacting program



# **“ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES”**





# WHAT THE PROGRAM MANAGER AND TEAM OWE YOU

- **Frank and timely program status**
  - **Cost**
  - **Schedule**
  - **Performance**
    - **logistics and support**
- **Honest opinions on handling and solving issues and fires as they come up**
- **“Heads up” to you before notifying their management on any issues with the user organizations**



# WHAT THE PROGRAM MANAGER AND TEAM OWE YOU

- **Invitation of participation in any meetings or telecons that directly affect input or action by the user organization**
- **Most importantly, no final SPO decision without input from the user**

*Again, it's our money*



# WHAT YOU OWE THE PROGRAM MANAGER

- **You're the customer!**
  - Consistent, clear articulation of the user's requirements
- **Clear and timely information on user's position with proposed SPO decisions**
- **Lead time notification on modifications the user is interested in during the course of the program**
  - **Helps everybody in minimizing cost,**

*Requirements and translation through specifications and flight test results need to meet the original intent of the user's needs!*



# WHAT ELSE YOU CAN DO

- **Be the source for solution ideas**
  - **Material example:** AFRC aircraft platforms for testing
  - **Personnel example:** Flight line personnel TDY to SPO for “real world” inputs to logistics support
- **Thinking out of the box**
  - **Combining Qualification Testing and QOT&E testing?**
  - **Piggyback the additional flight tests with “program x” going on at the same time?**
  - **Questioning to invoke “sanity check”**
  - **Breaking the “it’s always been done that way” syndrome**



# KEY (WATCH) POINTS

## Four sources of information and help

1. Education process starts with review of key parts of the contract (or RFP as appropriate)
  - Statement of Work
  - Integrated Master Schedule
  - Requirements Documentation (as reflected by the contractor)
2. AFRC has the necessary acquisition expertise
  - OL-S at Wright Patterson AFB
  - OL-R at Hill AFB
  - Reference:  
<http://www.afrcrequirements.wpafb.af.mil>
3. Acquisition team functional members
4. Defense Acquisition tools such as Defense Acquisition Desktop





# KEY (WATCH) POINTS

- **Involvement with the acquisition team**
  - **Not the same for all program functions (logistics, contracting, engineering, etc.)**
  - **Changes over time**
  - **Key members associated with an issue or function**
    - **who really “has the stick”?**
    - **who builds consensus?**
      - **AFRC/XPR**
    - **all goes back to the Program Manager**



# KEY (WATCH) POINTS

- Getting on “same sheet of music” with acquisition team
- ... while not falling into the “it always has to be done this way” mentality with the group
- Again, thinking out of the box and always asking why things need to be done certain ways versus... status quo
- SPO members may not be the

*Prerequisite to questioning and challenging...  
must know the requirements*



# SUMMARY

- **Gaining proper perspective of the program office environment, and work involved is a good first step**
- **Acquisition can be a complex “dance” with agencies and offices external to the Integrated Product Team (IPT)**
- **While it takes the whole team to correctly execute the program...**
- **...the activities and responsibilities of the user point of contact is key to the success of the program**